



Chiemi's Corner MUSIC REVIEWS & EVENTS

What is "Akamai"?

Akamai means clever in Hawaiian. Abe Lagrimas Jr., Randy Wong and Eric Lagrimas make up Akamai Brain Collective (ABC). These Kamainas (means born in Hawaii) now based primarily in Massachusetts, create their own Hawaii-style jazz, blues, exotica and pop fusion in what they call "progressive island jams."

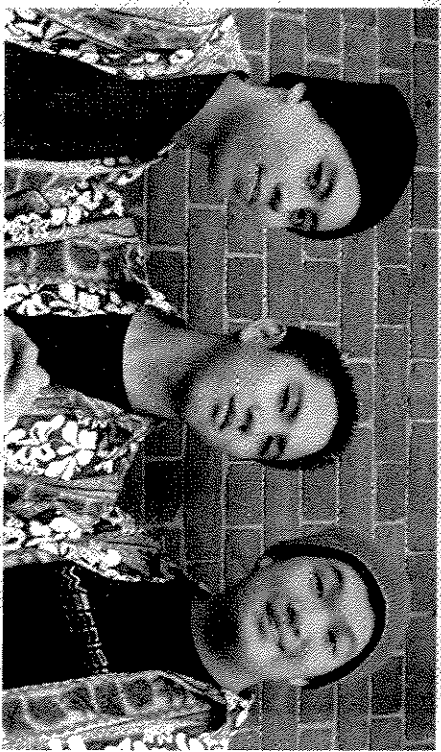
ABC recently performed at a NY ukulele festival, the Theater For The New City—www.nyukulefest.com. Said Wong, "It was really great to get out to the NY Uke Fest and perform for ukulele aficionados. And playing again with Abe and Yohei Nakamura (our guitarist) is always a very rewarding experience. We could tell the audience really appreciated our music, and likewise, us of them."

Wong also has plenty of exposure to music on a daily basis in his day job at the New England Conservatory in Boston. Wong is the Director Advisor on the

Music-In-Education program at New England Conservatory, working daily with promising young artists who are excited about the future of teaching music in innovative and interdisciplinary ways.

Wong said ABC was formed when Abe Lagrimas picked up a ukulele for a few Boston gigs and the ABC jams became a more frequent and constant state of affairs with a name.

ABC's debut was produced by Eric Lagrimas (Eric's Basement, a/k/a The Laundromat, Grand, NJ) and mastered by Hyo Sin Kim in Boston. It includes relaxed ukulele and guitar compositions with mellow vocals. "Bananas & Rice" takes off with subtle licks and island rhythm, followed by the more upbeat "Menehune Dance." "Island Smile" slides the listener to tranquility with synthesizer and able bass by Wong. "Dew Drop Inn" rocks out with marimba, drums, keyboard and vocal. "Lava



Akamai brings Hawaiian flavor to the East Coast

and pantaloons. "Cane Road Blues" moves the style back to the more spare—ukulele, piano, bass and drums. Then, in "Miles" and "Pineapple Bug," the ABC mixes it up with bells, string arrangements, egg shaker, hand-claps and an air conditioner box. Abe Lagrimas' ukulele solo, "Last Days of Summer," winds the sounds.

ABC plays and has played many local venues, including Harvard University. Wong graduated from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education in 2004 with a Masters degree in Arts-In-Education. As a student at Harvard, Wong brought the music of ABC to several University events, including its first-ever 5K Charity Fun Run, and as the background music for an Arts-In-Education sponsored puppet show. As a result, ABC was the recipient of the award "Best Band to Perform at Harvard University," given by the Harvard Graduate Council.